

#E1-692
RH

February 23, 2004

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal evaluation process.

I sincerely believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line are connected actions regardless where the railroad is constructed. Because of this connection they should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects, to include the absence of the quarry and rail lines.

My wife Maggie and I have lived about 2 miles northeast of the proposed quarry site for over 8 years. We have invested the majority of our savings in our property and live on retirement income and a small cow-calf operation. Our lives depend on the continuation of a safe and reliable water supply for our livestock as well as ourselves. It is my understanding that the quarry excavation will expose the cap to the aquifer and threaten its contamination from fuel spills, explosive residue (nitrates) and other toxic substances. One of us suffers from a chronic pulmonary condition called sarcoidosis, which is aggravated by dust and other particulate matter. The mining and crushing operation will threaten the clean and healthful air we presently enjoy. Finally, in our travels in this area we have found many artifacts of civilized occupation dating back thousands of years. Unless these sites are first studied and mitigated, no action disruptive to its archeological value should be taken.

Sincerely yours,


Dennis R. Skalka


Margaret A. Skalka

Cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Madla
Texas Representative Timoteo Garza
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Medina County Commissioner Royce Hartman